

CDPR Response – Comment Letter 7

7-1 Please see Master Response 5

7-2 Please see Master Response 2

7-3 Please see Master Response 5

7-4 Please see Master Response 1

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park GP/EIR
Comment Letter 7

MARTIN SIMONE
LEONARD M. ROOS

LISA SIMONE

LAW OFFICES OF
SIMONE & ROOS

A GENERAL PARTNERSHIP

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BERT D. GREENBERG (RETIRED)

August 13, 2007

VIA U.S. MAIL

Tina Robinson
California Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
Southern Service Center
San Diego, California 92108

RE: Proposed Santa Susanna Pass State Historic
Park Development

Dear Ms. Robinson:

I am writing this letter to voice my concern regarding the proposed development of campgrounds, restrooms, and kiosks proposed for the Santa Susanna Pass State Historic Park. My home is adjacent to the park and I can tell you first hand of the problems that I already have witnessed as well as those that I see occurring if development proceeds as planned.

7-1 Without the development, we already deal with vandals, gangs and vagrants who make the mountains as well as the adjacent Chatsworth Park a focal point of their activity. There is graffiti on our signage in our neighborhood and the park's mountains that has yet to be addressed. The resources of both our city and state do not allow for adequate patrolling of our area let alone the additional resources that would be needed should campsites be made available.

7-2 I have experienced the fires of 2005. They have burned to my property line. I pay higher homeowner's insurance because of my proximity to the park. I have also experienced the winds of Chatsworth. I am unable to obtain other insurance as my property is deemed to be in a high fire zone. Campsites in the Santa Susanna Park will be disastrous. Naivete' is the only explanation in thinking that this would be a reasonable idea. Simple notices posted at kiosks will not deter people from lighting up or littering as they do now.

7-3 The Santa Susanna Pass State Historic Park sits on the edge of the Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Both the Los Angeles Police and County Sheriffs lightly patrol us. Who would patrol the campsites and restrooms on a regular basis? Might these buildings become congregation points for the homeless, sexual predators and gangs in the area?

7-4 Finally, we are often under the misconception that by doing something we will necessarily improve it. As stated on its government website, "the park offers panoramic views of the rugged natural landscape as a striking contrast to the developed communities nearby." Campsites, restrooms and kiosks are not part of a natural landscape. Please stop improving our

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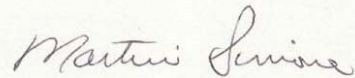
Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park GP/EIR
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7-4
(cont'd)

parks in this way.

Those citizens that want to experience nature come regardless of the amenities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martin Simone".

MARTIN SIMONE

CDPR Response – Comment Letter 8

- 8-1 Please see Master Response 1, No campsites are proposed at the south end of the Park
- 8-2 Please see Master Response 3
- 8-3 Please see Master Response 4
- 8-4 Please see Master Response 5
- 8-5 Please see Master Response 2
- 8-6 Please see Master Response 3
- 8-7 Please see Master Response 5
- 8-8 The existing air quality would not be affected by the facilities proposed in the General Plan. A permanent restroom facility would have less odor than a chemical toilet, which could be placed on site at any time for health and safety. Please see Master Response 5
- 8-9 Please see Master Response 5
- 8-10 Please see Master Response 7
- 8-11 Please see Master Responses, 1, 3, & 4. It is the intention of CDPR to balance the needs of the existing and future Park users while working with adjacent property owners.
- 8-12 Please see Master Response 3 and 8-11. Additionally, population and housing growth is a common issue in California. Park staff working on the General Plan include professional planners and land use experts.
- 8-13 Please see Master Response 5. A new ranger was recently assigned to patrol SSPSHP.
- 8-14 The guidelines were created to enhance the goals in the General Plan. These are meant to provide park staff with a framework for managing the Park. The adjacent property owners on Lilac Lane are in favor of the Preferred Alternative of the General Plan. This letter and it's responses are shown and answered jointly with the Anderson letter since they have the same content.

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park GP/EIR

Comment Letter 8

Tina Robinson, Environmental Coordinator
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Southern Service Center
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92108

August 16, 2007
Page 1 of 3

Dear Ms. Robinson,

This letter is in response to the PROPOSED SANTA SUSANA PASS STATE HISTORIC PARK GENERAL PLAN developments. First I want to **THANK YOU** for taking the time to listen to my concerns, and to read my letter. I have read your report in detail & attended some of the public meetings. As many others, I am a concerned resident. I live directly across the street from a proposed secondary access point, Andora Ave. & see a lot of what currently happens here! **Specifically, I do not want the development of campsites, restrooms or parking lots at the Andora Ave (Lassen/Baden/Valley Circle) entrance!** Please do not ADD anything to the Andora Ave access point!

My comments/concerns are listed in no particular order. I would propose that there be "no project" & that this great natural resource be left in its naturally progressing state, with weed obtainment for fire prevention only & litter removal. In the Executive Summary (page i) you indicate that your purpose is to "preserve", etc. If this is the case, then why are you destroying nature by adding parking areas, 100 sq ft restroom structures/buildings, etc?

Personally, I would like the Andora Ave "secondary access" point closed off, and relocate all public access to one primary entrance, which I am in hopes will be at Chatsworth Park South from Devonshire. I am in hopes that CDPR can work collaboratively with Santa Susana State Park with this request. IF the Andora Ave secondary access point remains as is (open) & I believe that it will continue this way, then at least the newly installed gate should be locked at sundown & reopened in the morning by your facilities dept. This will help deter after hours visitors. If the state does not have resources to lock & unlock the gate, I will happily volunteer to do it...for FREE! I just would need a key. Currently, this is not happening and people come and go at all hours. This is confirmed in your report on page 43 – Secondary Access 2 – Existing Conditions & Issues. – "unauthorized after hours use & certain favored party spots." To me, this equals gangs, graffiti, vandalism, theft, burglary from motor vehicles, etc. Although closing the gate might deter visitors, I realize that it may not stop the problem. See photo example A from the recently closed off gate @ Jeffery Mark.

With the descriptions in your plan, I believe this will influence visitation. More visitors =

- **Increased traffic/organized group hikes.** Our "broken" Andora Ave & the surrounding streets are already in need of resurfacing, which has been delayed several time already by the city. We do not need more traffic. See photo example D, which is directly in front of the Andora Ave secondary access point. People already speed up and down this area quite often. A parking lot will encourage more visitors & speeding vehicles. Andora Ave is one way in...and one way out! We don't need extra vehicles, and I don't want to be looking at a view of a parking lot!!!! Increased traffic = increased probability of accidents. See photo example E taken on 6/1/06. These were allegedly (under age) drunk gang members who had been drinking at Chatsworth park. These photos are of my personal home...directly across the street from the Andora Ave secondary entrance! If you need additional information on this, please contact LAPD Devonshire Division Gang Unit, or contact me.
- **Increased risk of fire,** endangering our homes & surrounding structures! We have had very little rain this year & who knows what the future brings! People do not respect the posted "no smoking" signs. Most of which are so faded, no-one would notice them anyway. See photo examples B. If you need a reminder of the horrible fire experience that we all had in 2005, I invite you to visit website - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmBq2DSichM>. If hikers or (if passed, campers) & domestic animals are stranded during a fire, who will perform and who pay for their attempted rescue/retrieval? My taxes are already high enough, for services that are barely satisfactory. How will people be treated that are exposed to Poison Ivy?
- **Increased noise...** at all times of the day & night.
- **Raises privacy, security & safety concerns.** (FYI – we have installed a home surveillance system due to the increased vandalism that our neighborhood has seen. So if you stop by our home, smile... you will be on camera!)
- **Encourages vandals.** This is already an unresolved problem, although the LAPD Devonshire Division has done a great job helping to reduce the problem.
- **Invites Vagrants/Homeless people.** They already make our parks & mountains their homes with their shopping carts, trash, etc. The Santa Susana Wash almost always has trash in it, not to mention standing water. A breeding ground for mosquitoes...or West Nile Virus!
- **Graffiti taggers & gangs...** our community already suffers from this problem as well as vandalism. I've been a victim. As reported by the LAPD in a Basic Car meeting #17A23, graffiti in our area is on the rise! See photo examples C. All photos have been taken within the park or within a short distance from the park. Additional photos are available through me, if needed. The West Valley Alliance, a free local graffiti removal service through the city of LA was previously able to remove graffiti within 48 hours. Now it takes about 10 business days or longer. The faster it is removed, the less likely taggers are to return as advised by the LAPD. What are you going to do to preserve & maintain the historical sites & prevent graffiti and vandalism & preserve our security and privacy? Taggers love to display their "artwork" on buildings (i.e. interiors/exterior

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8-7
(cont'd)

of restrooms, trees, signs, kiosks, educational signage, walls, etc). On page 31 of Existing Conditions and Issues 2 (Secondary access) you show a "Historic Structure." It has painted over graffiti on the top of the Structure/metal part. Same goes for your photo on page 32 "Railroad Tunnel." Same goes for page 39 "Interpretive trailhead kiosks adjacent to Chatsworth Park South." All are just proof of our ongoing problem and challenge. **How can this be prevented?** This is not a part of nature! The tunnel in particular, always has trash in or around it....often there are cans of used spray paint that the graffiti taggers littered with & many other items too!

8-8

- **Poorer air quality.** As stated on pg. 16 – Existing Conditions 2 of your report, "the park often has poor air quality." More visitors = more pollution, & a reduced quality of life. Not to mention the smell of added restrooms!

8-9

- **More litter.** Basic park maintenance is already at minimal levels, if any. **See photo examples F.** My husband & I clean the park at street level & inside the fence at Andora Ave....almost every weekend. If people leave trash/litter or food behind on their hikes, it will encourage the native animals to become dependent on people & continue to enter our neighborhoods. This puts humans as well as domestic pets in danger. Not to mention the native animals too! They will leave their natural habitats to roam our neighborhoods. **Coyotes love to feast on domestic animals.** Adding structures as restrooms, etc. may confuse wildlife to take up a new home....snakes, etc. This is not a natural habitat. This equals an unbalanced eco system.

8-10

- **Environmental impacts, including feces contamination from dogs.** **See photo examples G.** All photos (and more are available thru me) were taken within the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. The pet owners are not responsible. They do not pick up after their dogs, and they let their dogs run off-leash. **Isn't there a leash law?** I know that there is...but it is not enforced here! **How do you plan to address these problems?** Signs won't work, but I bet fines would! Why is this acceptable in a State Park? Dogs run loose thru our historic park on a daily basis & on Andora Ave. as well. I do not look forward to the day that one of the speeding motorists AGAIN, hits a innocent animal due to lack of responsibility of its owner/s. One person, (who I will only refer to as: John Doe) lost their dog who was not on a leash...and later found it dead in a "meadow." This is a danger to domestic animals. **How do you plan to address this on-going problem?** Educational signage will not work.....people are just not respectful. **Other negative environmental impacts** that your plan & proposed recreational activities will create, include but not limited to might be: endangering plants & wildlife (approximately 391 have been identified per your report) within the park, quality of life/health to all living things, horse droppings in the street (we end up cleaning the street with the "free fertilizer!") A task that we would rather not have to do. I really wonder why people think that it is Ok to leave *droppings* in a beautiful park like this, when so much education & focus has been put on picking up after our pets. When we question pet owners about this, they often get offended and rude to us.

8-11

- **Encourages digging for artifacts or kids/people digging to make "jumps" for bicyclists.**
- **Aesthetic Impacts/Distorted views of nature.** Construction of structures (i.e. restrooms) & parking areas will **disrupt the natural appearance and views** in our neighborhood & community. This would have a significant negative impact on our community, reduce property values, and cause adverse environmental impacts. Your plan states this will be "reduced." (not removed). **We don't want it reduced....it just should not happen!** I don't believe that you have tested the soil for contamination from **Rocketdyne** yet. If you have, is radiation present? If yes, what makes you think that you can safely proceed with your plan? Even if the soil is not contaminated, the construction dust alone would be bothersome, not to mention heavy equipment/trucks driving on our streets that are already in poor condition.
- **Encouragement of Lewd Acts.** This problem was reported happening in the parking lots of Chatsworth Park & Mason Park in an LAPD Neighborhood Watch Basic Car #17A23 meeting @ St John Eudes church. People that live in their mobile homes, vans, cars, etc. & park at the parks, were approaching children as well. I won't go into more detail. Your report indicates that most park visitors come within a 10 mile radius. In Chatsworth alone, there are 20 registered sex offenders. Here is the website link if you care to see the details, <http://www.city-data.com/soz/soz-91311.html>. **Keep in mind....a 10 mile radius will increase this number drastically.** By the way, I found a used condom in the park on a recent visit/hike! **This is just another example of why I don't want a parking lot across the street from my home!** Not to mention that Chatsworth is the Porn Movie capitol of the country. If you don't believe me, search or google the internet with the question – "Is Chatsworth, Ca the porn capital of the country?"

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A few other comments/concerns that I have include the following:

8-12

Your report on page 15 – Existing Conditions and Issues 2 (Secondary Access) – indicates that this area “consists mainly of open spaces and low-to medium density residential neighborhoods”. Have you not noticed that we are a growing community? We don’t need more visitors from that 10 mile radius you refer to in the same section! Within that 10 mile radius, new residential construction is booming & population is increasing! Some locations include Topanga Cyn @ Chatsworth St., Topanga Cyn @ Plummer, Baden/Farralone, Porter Ranch, top of Topanga (above 118 fwy), and the list goes on. **Of those of you who put the report & General Plan together, how many of you actually live and/or work in our community of Chatsworth?**

8-13

What are the details of how you plan to adequately manage, maintain & provide security to this park in regards to **all** concerns listed above? Especially after hours. Currently, we have minimal, if any, patrol by rangers. Our Peace Officers are working with a reduced staff & reduced resources. Are we ever going to get a full time, on-site park ranger? This is a large area for one person to patrol, but anything will help. Do you have the resources, staff and financing to protect us & what will the enforcement be? How are rules going to be enforced? Signs don’t work! It seems like there is already a lack of management and delay of our resources.

In general, your report indicates stated GOALS in “The Plan 3 – Minimal Impact” section, but it does not explain how they will be reached or maintained/kept, in the guidelines.

In this letter, I speak mainly of the secondary access of Andora Ave. My concerns are the same for the **secondary access on Lilac Lane.**

8-14

In closing, I hope that you can put yourself in my position and those of the other concerned neighbors & fulfill our requests. We have been through so much sadness as a community.....fires, vandalism, theft (even of an American Flag, holiday decorations, lamp posts, etc)..... all of which I was a victim of..... as well as may of my neighbors. Our community is also dealing with proposed new residential over-developments on a somewhat regular basis. This is just to name a few.

Lastly, although the “Anderson’s” @ 9800 Andora Ave. do not live directly across the street from the Andora Ave. secondary entrance like I do, they agree to the views in this letter & will submit a copy too, with their signature.

A hard copy of this will be delivered via Fed Ex to you on Monday, Aug. 20, 2007.

Thank you again for your time.

Mr. & Mrs. Altmayer
9866 Andora Ave.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Daytime work phone/contact: Georgia Altmayer, 310.864.6413

&

Mr. & Mrs. Anderson
9800 Andora Ave.
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

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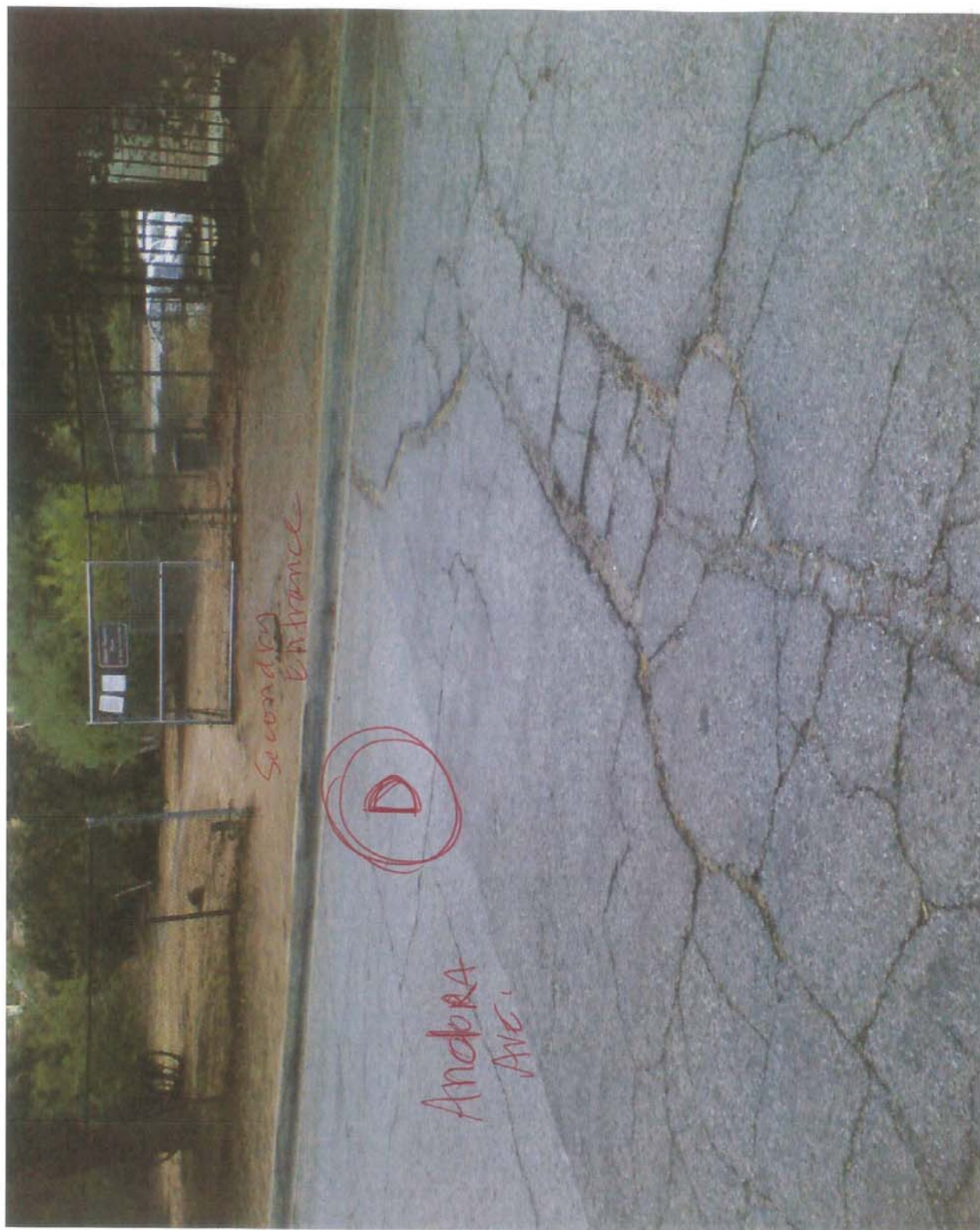
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All graffiti photos are from within the park. other photos available through me, if needed.



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Andora Ave
Secondary
Access
point.



E

This is /
my home!
It took 6 mos.
before we were
able to "fix"
everything

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 Comment Letter 8

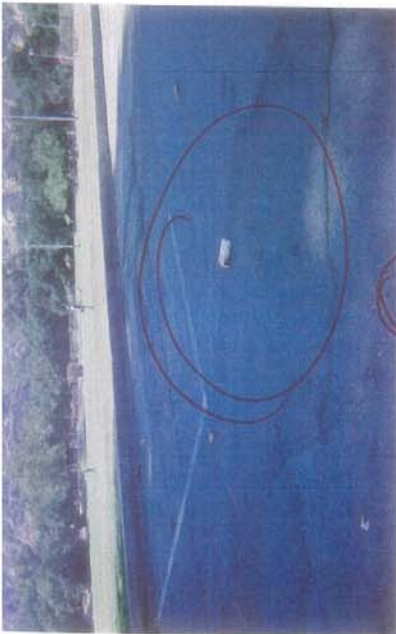


(P)



(F)

Trash in wash,
 Santa Susana
 Wash



Chats. PK (B) Cigarettes



(F)

Trash &



D & F

Trash &
 evidence
 of alcohol
 use within
 the

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Valley Circle, (C)
Near Devonshire (Park)



(C)



Devonshire, (C)
Near Valley Circle (Near park)



(B)

Inside State Historic
Park

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TRASH/
DUMPING.



DRY FIRE
TREE
HAZARD

CDPR Response – Comment Letter 9

- 9-1** Thank you for your support and working with CDPR to resolve your concerns at Lilac Lane and within the Park.
- 9-2** Alternatives 1 and 2 have been dropped from further consideration.
- 9-3** Protection of the Park's resources was foremost in consideration of the Goals, Guidelines, and Management Zones within SSPSHP. CDPR will work with Park volunteers for many different functions including the protection of native plant communities. Again, thank you for your support and cooperative efforts to make the General Plan balanced between community and statewide needs. Park resource interpretation will be emphasized as future facilities are approved and constructed.
- 9-4** Please see Master Response 2
- 9-5** Please see Master Response 6

Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park GP/EIR
Comment Letter 9

By e-mail

Dear Ms. Robinson,

9-1

I live on Lilac Lane and have been very concerned about the park development and the affect that it may have upon the environment and upon our quality of life and personal safety. I have attended several public meetings and have given much input and feedback to the park department's representatives. I am pleased to observe that we have been heard and that many of our concerns have been addressed.

In a nutshell, Figure 5 showing the "Preferred Plan" is a great solution for all and I encourage you to support this well thought out plan. It makes excellent use of the land for the public's enjoyment while maintaining respect and sensitivity for the neighboring communities. The planners seem to have found a "win-win" scenario. *The "Preferred Plan" is indeed preferred! Go for it!*

9-2

On the other hand, Figure 6, "Alternative Management Zone", Alternatives 1 and 2 (especially 2!) have no sensitivity whatsoever to all the legitimate concerns brought to the attention of the parks department by neighboring communities. Alternatives 1 and 2 create multiple dangers to local, taxpaying citizens who should not have to give up their own quality of life or safety in order to make this land available to the public. *Please scrap these poorly executed alternatives.*

Now for the not so in a nut shell. In fact, the you couldn't fit this in a watermelon! But please read on. I have questions.

9-3

First I want to applaud any all efforts as outlined in the plan for:

- Protecting native plant communities (I personally will volunteer for seed collection for banking and removing noxious, invasive weeds and help promote the curtailing of planting invasive species in our communities.)
- Preserving and protecting our "wetlands" (Such as it is!)
- Habitat restoration for wildlife (Particularly the enlargement of biocorridors for easy passage for larger animals and the discouraging of suburban infrastructure.)
- Exotic animal control (Don't worry about the cats, as long the park will not decrease the coyote population they'll take care that!)

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9-3
(cont'd)

- *Preserving archeological sites* (Developing a "nondestructive, nonimpactive and safe learning environment" is key to bringing awareness to the public about the importance of the history of this area and our responsibility to "tread lightly".)
- *Limiting light pollution* (We could use some light pollution control on Lilac Lane too! Perhaps you could help some of our neighbors to be more sensitive to this issue.)
- *Additional land acquisition*
- *Limiting overnight camping* (Wise move keeping campgrounds out of the "Cougar Condo" feeding grounds and more importantly out of the wind tunnel directly up to our homes! Thank you very much for listening to our fearful voices.)

I encourage you, as the plan is put into action, to give these all important environmental issues as much if not more priority and funding than may be given to the development of human conveniences. After all, what will this park become if access to an uneducated public is enhanced and encouraged without the protection of the land and the precious archeological sites?

There are a few concerns and/or questions that I still have with the proposed "preferred" plan. They are:

9-4

- **Fire!** *Even with the campgrounds being located where they are on the preferred plan, one cannot help but be concerned about fire in our dangerous, often windy, high risk area. What will be done to insure that campground rules for use of fire are being monitored and enforced? Smokey the Bear doesn't live here and this is the single biggest concern of everyone.*
- **Fire!** *Guideline 8 on page 12 (impact by firefighters and their equipment) worries me. Please do nothing to delay, obstruct or hinder our firefighters from protecting us and saving our homes!*
- **Fire!** *Guideline 3 on page 12 says that the foot print of the "buffer zone" will be outside the park boundaries. How does this impact our personal property? Who will maintain these buffer zones?*
- **Fire!** *"Controlled burns." Need I say more? Yes I do. We all understand the theory behind the controlled burn. However, I am a firm believer in "human error" and we have witnessed these controlled burns quickly turning disastrous at great and tragic personal loss to the public. The wind conditions in the Santa Susanna area have been changing and the traditional "windy season" of October is no longer reliable. (Global*

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9-4
(cont'd)

warming perhaps?) The conditions here can change in a heartbeat at any time of year and any efforts in limiting underbrush with "controlled" burns simply sounds nuts. I implore you to work closely with the local fire authorities who have a better understanding of our very specific local weather conditions.

- *Campgrounds. I was not able to find much of a description of the campground. Most of us are opposed to overnight camping for the above mentioned problems related to **fire**. Other concerns would be transient use and loud partygoers. Nobody wants to keep responsible families from enjoying the park. And the preferred does a nice job of positioning the campgrounds. Will this "joint usage" with L.A. county allow those affected most by the campgrounds and gateways the ability to have law enforcement get involved rather than depend on a park ranger who is not going to actually be on site much the time or even close by?*
- *Wildlife protection and "exotic animal control" It is important that nature's checks and balances are kept in order. Will there ever be a coyote extermination program of any kind? Or other animals an uneducated public may consider "dangerous" such the bobcat? We need our local wild canines and felines to keep our rodent population under control. And all those feral cats too! Also, how does one control the invasion of the cowbird? (No kidding, I'd really like to know! I love our finches!)*
- *"Habitat modification" Just what would that entail?*
- *"Enhance the wetlands" Just what would that entail? We are also concerned about the contamination of ground water and the surface water at our pond by the old Rocketdyne test site. Will the public be warned about a possible danger to their pets by long term drinking or swimming this water?*

9-5

Thank you Ms. Robinson for your careful analysis of our concerns for the local environment and for our personal safety. Again, I want to congratulate the planners for their sincere effort to design a win-win situation with the "Preferred Plan" that is so very preferable!

Sincerely,

*Mary C. Barhnill
7897 Lilac Ln.
Simi Valley, CA 93063*

CDPR Response – Comment Letter 10

- 10-1** Thank you for your continuing interest in the Park and support for the Preferred Alternative of the General Plan

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Comment Letter 10

August 3, 2007

Tina Robinson, Environmental Coordinator
California Department of Parks and Recreation
Southern Service Center
8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, CA 92608

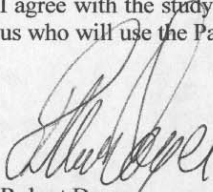
Dear Ms. Robinson:

10-1

I have gone over the Preliminary General Plan/ DEIR for the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park in detail. It is an extremely well-researched and clearly-presented document. It is evidence of a very professional and well-directed staff effort. The development team is to be commended.

I have lived within a mile of this site for the past 42 years and am happy to see that the unique historic elements of the area will be preserved and protected, along with the existing wildlife corridor.

I agree with the study's conclusion that the "Preferred Plan" would most benefit those of us who will use the Park.



Robert Dager
Past President - Chatsworth Neighborhood Council
Resident of Chatsworth since 1965.

10035 Bierson Ave
Chatsworth, CA 91311